
A TRUE
NOTION
OF THE
WORSHIP of GOD:
OR A
VINDICATION
OF THE
SERVICE
OF THE
CHURCH
OF
ENGLAND.

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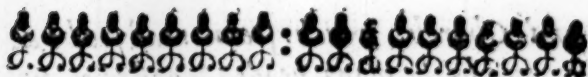
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T O T H E
R E A D E R.

Reader,



Know to some the very
Title of this ensuing
discourse will be suffi-
cient ground of preju-
dice against it. A Vn-
dication of the Service
of the Church of Eng-
land to such, signifying nothing else but a
Plea for formality and superstition: But I
shall not much concern my self with the ob-
loquies of such men; nor regard the scorns
of those vain Persons that enquire no far-
ther into Books then their Titles. But per-
haps others not much different from them,
may think, that to stand up for our Liturgy
and

To the Reader.

and Church, which seems ready to be devoured by the many-headed Monster of multifarious Sects, a desperate and little better then ridiculous attempt; yet to brave and give check to their confidence, in imitation of the courage of that Roman, who purchased the ground possessed by the Enemies of the Commonwealth, demonstrating thereby his unshaken expectation for the time to come of more happy dayes for his Country. I thought this undertaking might presage better to our Mother the Church, then the present state of things seem to do, and that I might prevent the drooping, and dispondency of her Children at such a time by a resolute defence of her and her way of worship, which in the conceit of her Enemies is not only contemptible, but as good as overthrown already, by an impetuous Torrent of opposers. By endeavouring therefore to shew that the Practice of our Church, hath a good Basis of Reason to support it; I thought by this means to raise the hopes of her future prosperity in them; that might begin to fear whether she could stand against those violent

To the Reader.

lent Storms, with which she is pressed on every side from a multiplicity of Adversaries.

And since from him who makes his private thoughts thus publick, it is challenged as a debt to give some account of the Arguments that induced him to it, this may pass for one; But this is not all, there were other considerations that engaged me in this work; Namely, observing the Constitution and Custom of our Church, which appoints no place for a Sermon in the Afternoon, and that some kept to the Law, and others deviated from it, began to think which was most reasonable, and by proving the former to be so, I thought I should wipe off those unjust imputations and aspersions thrown upon them that do it. Besides I took notice, that though some out of a well meaning mistake, thinking that which they call Preaching, the only means of Salvation; and most acceptable Service to God, judg'd themselves bound to take all opportunities for it; and others out of worse ends looking upon it, as that by which they maintain their esteem,

amongst

To the Reader.

amongst the people, and gratifie their desire of Glory, and popular applause, and the pride they take in being Demagogues, and having crowds of Disciples to flock after them, were loath to let slip any occasion of feeding those dearly beloved lusts; yet there were others, though forced to comply with the humour of the Populace, and unwilling to disoblige them, or incur their displeasure, I plainly perceived would be glad fairly to be delivered from the heavy task, under which they groaned in secret; for these I had a Compassion, and thought I might do them a good Office, if I could by any reasons alledged, abate the rigour of their Taskmasters, and perswade them from exacting such intollerable labours, or engage them in venturing upon what they cannot, but think reasonable, had they courage enough to bear up against the Clamours of men.

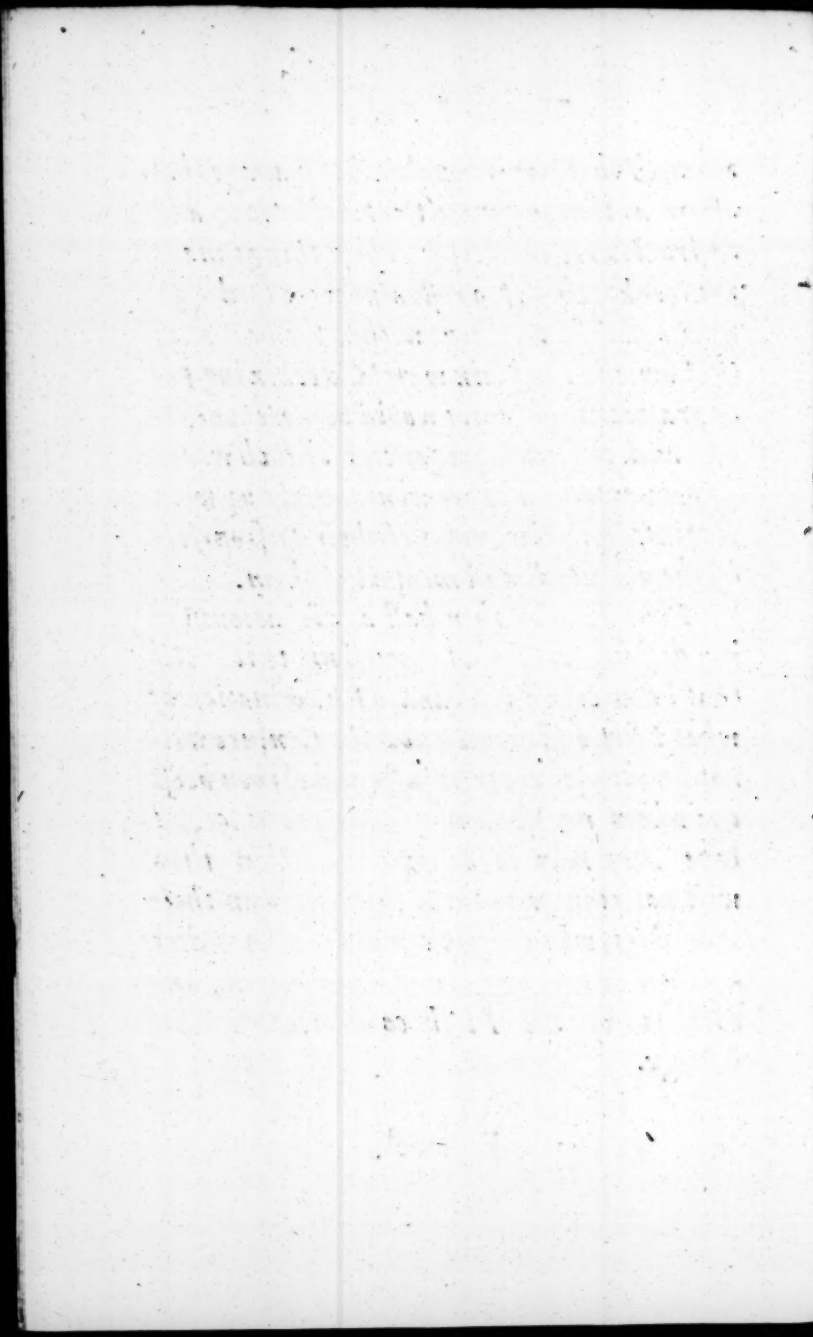
Neither was I a little moved with the consideration of that raw, indigested, and unprofitable stuff that is too often vented in Sermons,

To the Reader.

mons, & that few are qualified to manage that affair as they ought for the Edification, and instruction of the people. These things made me think, that if a restraint were laid upon men, and they were kept within the bounds of the Law, and the plain way of Catechizing put in practice, the hearers would be more benefited, and the extravagancies of such would be prevented, who are wont to make up what is wanting in the weight of their Discourses, by the multitude and measure of them.

Thus Reader thou hast a brief account of my design, and what moved me to it. All that I now crave is a candid Examination of what I say, and then I know the Censure will not be very severe or unjust; and if thou beest one whom my Reasons cannot convince, I hope they may so far prevail, that thou wilt not joyn with them that condemn those Ministers, who exactly conform to the Orders of their Superiours, as idle Shepherds, and careless of the Flock committed to their Charge.

Farewel.





*A true Notion of the Worship of
God : Or a Vindication of the
Service of the Church of Eng-
land.*



Ince the time that the
simplicity of Christi-
anity departed from
the world, men have
invented various ways
of expressing their de-
votions, and Religion
growing at length to be more matter
of talk then practice : Some men have
placed the Worship of God chiefly in
the discourses of things that are Divine,
and

and this conceit hath so far prevailed with them, that where these are not, they think God not served as he ought to be : nor such services worthy of their attendance.

The Church of *England*, as her constitutions, are Sober and Rational, doth not exclude Preaching, or deny its usefulness ; yet not enjoining it at all publick meetings for the Worship of God, supposes his service may be truly performed without it. My design is therefore to justify her in this, and to Vindicate her Custom in this particular, from those reproaches which the mistakes of some men concerning the Worship of God have cast upon it.

That therefore the Service of the Church of *England* is a true and laudable Service, and not to be slighted and abandoned by them that profess Christianity, though without a Sermon, I shall endeavour to prove by these following Arguments.

I. Christians

1. Christians assemble to Worship God. 2. The Worship of God consists principally in Prayer and Thanksgiving. 3. Prayer and Thanksgiving bring much Glory to God and consequently must be acceptable service to him. 4. In the service of the Church of *England*, where no Sermon is enjoined there are things very material, and such as should deter all that profess Christianity from slighting it, and refusing to be present at it.

1. The great end of Religious Assemblies amongst Christians, is to worship God. This I think so evident, that it needs no proof, and all will I suppose own it: For those that place Gods service principally in hearing of Sermons, yet in this agree with others, that the chief end of their coming together is to worship God: And hearkening to Gods Word, is I confess, an Homage to him, an owning his Authority, and our Subjection, a profession of our readiness

diness to obey his Voice, and do his Will, 'Tis to give Testimony to his Infallibility, and that what comes from him is worthy to be believed, and entertained by us, it is to acknowledge his fitness, to regulate us and the like, and by lending an Ear to those that come in his name, an Honour redounds to him that sends them; yet it seems the meeting together of those that are not learners, and beginners in Christianity is rather to Worship than be instructed; because they are supposed to have knowledge before, or else they would worship they know not what, and be guilty of the *Athenians* folly, who erected an Altar to the unknown god. He that comes to God must believe that he is, and the Rewarder of them that seek him; that he is his Creator, and indued with all those perfections which make him a fit Object of Divine Worship, and those that make their addresses to him through Christ, must know and believe

lieve, the Sum of the Gospel, that his Christ is He that made Reconciliation betwixt God and Man, that he is the Mediator of Intercession, the great High Priest of our Profession, upon whose interest and account we expect favour and acceptance with God.

2. The Worship of God doth chiefly consist in Prayer and Thanksgivings; for to Worship God, is to make our application to him, upon an apprehension and belief of his infinite power, goodness, and wisdom, and all the Perfections and Excellencies in his Nature, which is performed by Prayer and Thanksgiving, as by running through the several parts of Prayer will appear.

Confession of sin supposeth, and owneth Gods Authority to give Law to us his Creatures, and to take Cognizance of, and punish the breach of those Laws. Our asking pardon of him supposeth he hath power to assume or de-
part

part from his right of punishing, and by this we own him as the Supreme Governour of Mankind, seeking all things we need, or are any way for our benefit of him, declares our dependence upon him, and that he is the Fountain of all good. It implies our belief of his Omnipotency to supply, and his Infinite goodness that inclines him to bestow what we need, and encourages us in our addresses to him.

Prayer, that hath its foundation in his Promises, supposeth his veracity. That Prayer is directed to him in all places of the world, where he is owned, supposeth his Omniscience and Omnipresence. Neither can any thing more fitly be called an acknowledgement of his excellency in his Attributes, Works, Noble Acts, and Mercies towards us, then Thanksgiving, or the Laudatory part of Prayer. To bewail our faults before God, Deprecate his displeasure, Implore his help in any thing we need, are
Testi-

Testimonies of the greatest Honour, ascribed to him, and comprehend the full Nature of Divine Worship.

And that this was the first notion of Divine Worship, which did most early enter into the thoughts of men, after they had the knowledge of God, appears by what was done when Religion first began to make shew of it self in the world. The first thing was calling upon the Name of the Lord. *Noah* built an Altar, *Gen.* 8. 20. Upon the first appearance of God to *Abraham*, he presently built an Altar, *Gen.* 12. 7. And then he is said to have call'd upon the Name of the Lord. These Altars were erected for Sacrifice, and Sacrifices were in order to Prayer; for they are nothing else but Rites of Supplication; whereby they that came to God, would by that means bespeak his favour, and acceptance, as Mr. *Mede* hath well shewn and proved by many places of Scrip-

Scripture, *1 Sam. 7. 9. 1 Sam. 13. 12. Ezra 6. 10.*

And these Sacrifices not only accompanying their Confessions and Petitions ; but their Hymns and Doxologies also, as appears *2 Chron. 29. 27.* to usher them in with more acceptance, and so always preceding, or attending their Prayers, shew that their worship consisted chiefly in Prayer.

All the Sacrifices, Burnt-Offerings, Sin-Offerings, Trespass-Offerings, and Peace-Offerings under the Law, had joyned with them a Confession of sin, Deprecation of Gods displeasure, Imploing his Mercy, Petition for something needful, or return of Praise for something received, or (which is a part of Praise due to the Divine Majesty) were an acknowledgment of his Dominion, or a performance of something that might testifie their Honour and Reverence to him, as the whole Burnt-Offering.

And

And if we enquire into the story of what they did in their publick Worship amongst the Jews, Heathens, and Ancient Christians, we shall see that it was either without that which is commonly called Preaching ; or had not so much, as if it were judged the most necessary part of their divine service,

To begin with the *Jews*. Their Worship consisted chiefly in Sacrifices, and that they were Rites of Supplication, and had always Prayers and Thanksgivings annexed to them, hath been already shewn.

They had their weekly Readings of the Law of *Moses* ; but that they always had in like manner their weekly Sermons upon some part of the Law of *Moses*, we no where find sayes *Hooker*, *Eccles*, Pol. l. 5.

The Law was read, and the very reading of it barely (for ought we find by the Text) after it had either been lost, or somewhat neglected in *Josias* time, did so convince and affect the people, that they made a Covenant with God to keep his Commandements, 2 *Chron.* 34. 30, 31.

And though *Ezra* the scribe is set upon a Pulpit of Wood in the Story of *Nehemiah*, c. 8. to open the Book of the Law, and that the Levites are said to cause the people to understand the Law, and to read in the Book of the Law distinctly, and to give the sense, yet I think this was extraordinary, and in a particular case after a great defection of the people from the Law, when they had forgotten it, and were to be put in mind of their duty. Their ordinary Service amongst the *Jews*, besides Sacrifices, Offering of Incense, and Prayers was (for ought that I can yet learn) only

only reading some Portion of the Law, and no constant Exposition or Preaching upon it. Indeed in matter of Controversie or doubt, the Priests were to give Judgment, and the Law to be sought at their mouth: But I do not find that this was their work, to explain the Laws upon the dayes of their most solemn worship. There was on the Sabbath day added to the *juge Sacrificium*, as may be seen, *Num. 28. 9.* *Two Lambs of the first year, without spot, and two tenth Deales of Flour for a Meat-Offering, mingled with Oyl, and the Drink-Offering thereof;* and this is said, *v. 10.* *To be the Burnt-Offring of every Sabbath, besides the continual Burnt-Offring, and his Drink-Offering.* if discoursing upon some part of the Law had been necessary to make the Worship of God compleat, it is not improbable, but God himself would have given some particular command, concerning it, as he did

in other matters, to be performed in the Temple-service.

Neither may any pretend, that the Gospel-worship should excel, and have something more then that under the Law, and that if there were not always Preaching, as part of the publick service under the Law, yet there ought to be in Gospel times. This Exception hath no great force: For worship being an address to the Deity in such a way, as may testifie our dependance upon him, and respect to him, the only difference betwixt that under the Law, and that under the Gospel, is, that the first was with more External and Corporeal performances, the latter more Spiritual. And as their Prayers and Thanksgivings under the Law, were accompanied with Sacrifices, to rendet them the more grateful; so now are all the Prayers and Thanksgivings of the Christian Church tendered to God through the great Sacrifice

crifice of Christ, and as under the Law God was worshiped, both under the Notion of him that Created Heaven and Earth, and as he that brought the *Israelites* out of the Land of *Egypt*, and yet the Worship was in substance the same, so under the Gospel God having Redeemed Mankind, is invoked under the Name of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and yet the Worship the same, though under different forms, with that in the time of *Moses*.

Thus we may see, that the Church of *England*, when it enjoyns not a Sermon in all publick Assemblies; for the Worship of God doth not fail in her duty, so long as the Worship of God is in the truest Notion of it, which consists in Prayer and Thanksgiving, kept up, and that she doth not swerve from the Pattern of Worship in Practice amongst the *Jews*, which was appointed by God himself.

The next enquiry is to be made concerning the performances in use amongst the Heathens in the worship of their gods, and by what we find practiced by them, we shall further establish our first Argument built upon that foundation, that the worship of God chiefly consists in Prayer.

The Heathen, as they had by the light of Reason a knowledge of the Existence and Nature of a God, so must they by consequence understand and have some conceptions of Worship, and if we learn what they did in their Devotions, we shall discover what was the most natural Notion of Divine Worship.

Vpon the first apprehension of the being of a God, Reason dictates, that that men should deprecate his displeasure, fly to him for help and succour in all their necessities by humble supplication

tion, and return a thankful acknowledgment of all his benefits, and by all ways and means possible express their Honour and Reverence of him.

The Rites of offering Sacrifices very probably introduced from the beginning, and might arise from the first conception of a Deity, from whence men might conclude, that that by such Offices they did Honour their god, when they gave to him those things which were most dear and precious, and by that means publickly demonstrated, that God had a Dominion over, and a better Title to the things they offered, then they themselves had, to whose use those things continually served.

The great foundation of worshipping the gods amongst the Heathen, was a sense of their dependance upon them, and belief of the care they had of them, as may appear by that of *Tully de Nat.*

deorum lib. 2. where shewing, that the denial of Providence took away all Piety, he sayes, *Sanctitas est scientia colendorum deorum, qui quamobrem colendi sint non intelligo, nullo accepto ab ijs nec sperato bono,* where we see, that worship in the sense of the Heathen, chiefly consisted in what was rendred to God for good, either received or expected, the first of which was by praise and thanksgiving the other by prayer.

A great part of the Worship of the Heathen stood in their Sacrifices; which were Rites that did precede their Prayers and Thanksgivings to bespeak their acceptance, as was said before concerning the Sacrifices amongst the *Jews*, and may be shewn by many passages out of their writings.

Qui totos dies precabantur, & immolabant ut sui liberi sibi superstites essent superstitiosi

perstitiosi sunt appellati, Cic. de nat. deorum, lib. 2. Where we see how these two were joyned together, Prayer and Sacrifice, the latter to make the first acceptable.

When they were to Sail, as we have it in *Virgil, Æneid. 3.*

Placemus ventos, & Gnosa Regna Petamus,

Nec longo distant cursu modo Jupiter adfit;

Sic fatus meritos superis mactavit honores.

Taurum Neptuno, Taurum tibi pulcher Apollo.

Nigram Hiemi pecudem Zephyris felicibus albam.

Dido and her Sister going to enquire of the gods concerning the match with *Æneas.*

Principio

*Principio delubra adeunt pacemq; per
aras*

*Exquirunt : Mactant lectas de more
bidentes.*

*Legifera Cereri , Phaeboq; Patriq;
Lyao,*

*Junone ante omnes cui vincula jugalia
cura.*

Their Sacrifices and Oblations were
such as had Relation to Prayer or
Thanksgivings.

Their *Anathemata* or *Donaria* were
certain remembrances with Thankfulness
of the dangers; so their *militos emeriti*
hung up their Arms, and they that had
escaped Shipwracks, described in Tables
their past hazards, and hung them up in
the Temples of their gods.

Justin in the 24th. Book of his Hi-
story speaking of the Temple of *Apollo*
at *Delphos*, sayes, *Multi ibi & opulenta
Regum*

Regum & populorum visuntur munera, quæq; magnificentia sui reddentium vota gratam voluntatem, & deorum responsa manifestant. By which it appears, that they were wont to return something to the gods for the granting of their desires, and to make vows when they made their Prayers, that such things should be offered to them, if they did obtain what they requested. So *Hector*, in *Homer*, desiring to kill *Ajax*, makes a vow, That if he did, he would bring his Arms to *Troy*, and hang them up in *Apollo's* Temple; and this was of affinity to their offering Sacrifices, when they made any Prayers for any thing, for both had the same design, namely to engage and bespeak the favour of their gods.

Whence perhaps *Vota* comes to signify Prayers among the *Latins*; because they had annexed to them something that they did, *dijs vovere*.

And

And that they thought their gifts a kind of engagement to their gods to do them good, appears by that in *Mart. l. 10. Epigram 28.* speaking to *Fanus*.

*At tu Sancte Pater tanto pro munere
gratus,
Ferrea perpetuâ claustrâ tuere sera.*

And that they appeared not before their gods empty, is plain by that of the Poet, *Syl. Ital.*

*Causas Scire futuras.
Ante diem belliq; vices novisse petebat,
Ex in clavigeri veneratus numinis aras.
Captivis Onerat donis.*

Hannibal, before he sends to the Oracle to enquire what success he should have, bestows as an Oblation upon *Hercules* part of the prey which he had taken: So *Juvén. Sat. 6. v. 384.*

Cum

*Cum farre & vino vestam Fanumq;
rogabat.*

*Magne Geni cape Thura libens, votisq;
faveto. Tibul.*

I might heap up many more instances of this nature, to prove that what they offered to their gods, were but so many Rites of Prayer and Thanksgiving, and that Divine Worship consisted in these.

There was one way of approaching to their gods besides, *viz.* Consulting their Oracles, which were as the word of their gods; but this was but seldom, and upon particular occasions; nor was it any part of their constant Worship to attend them, and when they did go to enquire of them, it was a Prayer or Supplication to the gods to be heard in what they asked; directed in doubtful matters to know what was contingent, whether such and such undertakings should

should be prosperous or not? By all which they acknowledg the Power, Wisdom, and Goodness of the Diety, That he had a disposal of Events, Wisdom to forknow the Issue of things, and Ability to judge what was fittest to be done, and Goodness to order what was best for his Votaries. And to such kind of venerable apprehensions of their gods is to be refer'd, their refusal to undertake any thing; if by their Augury, or by any thing seen in the Entrails of Beasts, or by any Prodigies or Signs they found out that the gods did not approve it.

The sum of all Accounts to thus much, that the designs of the Religious Rites amongst the Heathen, were to deprecate and appease the displeasure of their gods, to entreat them to be favourable and propitious and bestow what they wanted; and to testify their acknowledgment of their sovereignty, and to make thankful returns for what they

they had received, all which are comprehended in the true notion of Prayer and Thanksgiving.

Although it may be thought needless to make further proofs of that which is so evident, yet I will add one consideration more to strengthen this Assertion that Divine Worship chiefly consists in Prayer. Which is this,

An Oath taken upon weighty Occasions, is by all Divines reckoned as a piece of Religious Worship, and that with good Reason, because God injoyn'd it as that which brings Honour to to his Name, *Deut. 6. 13. Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and shall swear by his Name.* Now an Oath is therefore a piece of Divine Worship, because it is an Invocation of God, a Prayer to him to be either *Testis*, or *Vindex*, a Witness, or Judge of the Truth or Falshood, of him that swear-eth: 'Tis to ascribe the Honour of Om-
science

Science and Omnipotency to God, Tert. Apologet. c. 32. says, that to Swear by the Genii, was to confer Divinity upon them, and honour their gods. Caterum genios adjurare consuevimus ut illa de hominibus Exigamus non dejerare ut illis honorem Divinitatis conferamus.

For the Practice of the Ancient Church in their Religious Assemblies, to trace the Footsteps of it is a work of great difficulty, and to undertake to do it fully, will require more time then is convenient for this small Treatise. Yet thus much we shall assert, that the Ancient Christians thought the great Christian Sacrifice, to be the whole sacred Action or solemn Service of the Church Assembled, as Mr. Mede in his *Tract* on *Mal. i. 11.* Call'd *The Christians Sacrifice* affirms; and which he defines to be an Oblation of Thanksgiving and Prayer to God the Father, through Jesus Christ, and his Sacrifice commemorated in the Creatures of Bread

Bread and Wine wherewith God had been first Agnized. And this the Fathers thought a fulfilling of that Propheſie, *Mal. I. 11. For from the Riſing of the Sun unto the going Down thereof, my Name ſhall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place Incenſe ſhall be offered unto my Name, and a pure Offering.* And they call'd the Offering of Prayer and Thankſgiving through Chriſt a Sacrifice, of which Mr. Mede makes many Proofs out of their Writings: To which I could add more of my own Obſervation.

From this Notion ſo clear in the Fathers, I conclude; That as Sacrifices, Prayers, and Thankſgivings amongſt the Jews, and Heathens, made up the entire Notion of Divine Worſhip. So alſo the Goſpel Sacrifices of Prayer and Thankſgiving, was in the ſenſe of the Fathers, compleatly the Worſhip of God, and though they had Diſcourſes upon the Word of God ſometimes,

C

yet

yet the Service was in their judgment,
the true Worship of God without it.

Some few Discoveries of what they
did in their Publick Assemblies, may
be made and collected from some Pas-
sages in Ancient Writers.

Ignat. Ep. ad Magnesios, Πάντες ἐπὶ το αὐτῷ ἐν
τῇ προσυχῇ ἅμα συνέχθε μία δειήσεις Ἰσω κοινὴ
ἐἰς τοῦς μία ἐλπίς ἐν ἀγάπῃ.

Ig. Ep. ad Ephesios, Ὅπερ ἀξίως ἐν πυκνέστερον
συνέχεται ἐἰς ευχαρίστησιν θεῷ, καὶ δόξαν ὅταν καὶ
συνεχῶς ἐπὶ το αὐτῷ γίνεσθε καθαιρῶνται αἱ
δυνάμεις το σατανᾶ, &c. ὃ γὰρ ἡμετέρας ὁμο-
νοίας καὶ συμφωνος πίστεως αὐτῷ μὲν ἐστὶν ὁλεθρος.

Here we see that they chiefly are ex-
horted by *Ignatius*, to meet for Prayer
and Thanksgiving, and a declaration
of their Union, in the Profession of the
same Faith (which no doubt was a part
of their Service as it is of ours) which
I understand by the ἐἰς τοῦς, and μία ἐλπίς
in the first passage quoted, and ὁμονοία
and

and συμφωνος πῖσις in the latter.

Justin Martyr, in his *Collig. c. 67*
Tryph. says: Καὶ τῇ τοῦ ἡλίου ληγομένῃ ἡμέρᾳ
 πάντων κατὰ πόλεις ἡαγρευ μένδων συνέλευσις
 γίνεται καὶ τὰ ἀπομνημονεύτα τῶν Ἀποστόλων, &c.
 ἀναγιγνώσκονται. He tells us, that every
 Sunday there were Meetings of them
 that dwelt in Cities and Countries in
 one place, and that they had the Wri-
 tings of the Prophets and Apostles read,
 and then some Exhortations after, and
 Instructions from what was read; and
 Prayers being ended, they distributed
 Bread and Wine. Where we see that
 Prayers and Administrations of the Sa-
 crament, which amongst the Fathers
 is call'd a Sacrifice, was the great Busi-
 ness of their Service; and if any argue
 from the Instructions and Exhortations
 mentioned, a necessity of a Sermon; he
 must also from thence conclude then in
 our Christian Assemblies, we ought al-
 ways to have the Sacrament of the
 Lords Supper.

Tert. Apolog. adv. gentes c. 38.
Corpus sumus de Conscientia Religionis,
& Disciplina unitate & spei fadere.
Coimus in catum & Congregationem ut ad
deum quasi manu facta precationibus ambi-
amus orantes. Hec vis Deo grata Oramus
pro Imperatoribus pro Ministris eorum et
potestatibus pro statu saculi pro rerum quie-
te, pro mora finis. Cogimur ad Divinarum
litterarum commemorationem si quid pra-
sentium temporum qualitas pramonere co-
git aut recognoscere certe fidem sanctis vo-
cibus pascimus, &c. Prayers and Read-
 ing the Scriptures, you see, were a great
 part of the Service.

Orig. l. 8. against Cels. To the Ac-
 cusation of the Heathens, that Chri-
 stians did not Worship the Ministers of
 God, that is, those Angels which they
 Worshipped, says: *Ανα τὸν ἑνα θεόν, καὶ*
ἑνα ἦσαν αὐτῷ καὶ λόγον καὶ εἰκόνα ταῖς κατὰ τὸ
δυνατὸν ἡμῖν ἰκεσίαις καὶ ἀξιώσεσι σέβομεν προ-
σαγον τῷ θεῷ τῶν ὄλων τὰς εὐχὰς διὰ τὴν μο-
νογενῆς αὐτῷ ὡς πρῶτον προσφέρομεν αὐτὰς, ἀξίων-

τας αὐτὸς προσάγειν ὡς ἀρχιερεὶα καὶ εὐχαὶ καὶ
 θυσίαι καὶ ἐντεύξεις ἡμῶν πρὸς ἐμὲ ὡς οἱ Θεοί.

By which he shews what Notion of Christian Worship he had, namely, that it consisted in Prayer and Thanksgiving, that is, such sacrifices as became the Gospel, offered to God the Father through Jesus Christ.

Hippolitus, cited by Mr. *Mede* in his proof of the Antiquity of Churches : In his Book *De consummationi Mundi seu de Antichristo*. In his description of the Persecution ; says, *Sacræ Ecclesiarum ades justar pomorum custodia erunt pretiosumque corpus & sanguis in diebus illis non extabit Liturgia Extinguetur, Psalmorum decantatio cessabit Scripturarum recitatio non audietur*. By what Irreligion he thought then would Reign, we may guess what was practised in their Assemblies, viz. Administration of the Sacrament of Christs Body and Blood; singing of the Psalms, rehearsal of the Scriptures; this Author con-

rish'd between the 20 and 30 years of the third Century. *Plin.* in his *Epist. Lib. 10. Ep. 97.* describing the Christians, and telling what they did say to *Trajan.* *Affirmabant hanc fuisse summam vel culpe suae vel erroris quod essent soliti isto die ante lucem convenire carmenque Christo quasi Deo dicere secum invicem seque Sacramento non in scelus aliquod obstringere, sed ne furta ne latrocinia ne adulteria committerent ne fidem fallerent, &c.* Quibus peractis morem sibi discedendi fuisse, &c. They met to sing Praises to Christ, and by a Sacrament did oblige themselves against wickedness, by which must be either understood the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood, which being a Fæderal Banquet they did by it bind themselves to the Belief and Practice of what was contained in the Gospel; and among the rest that they should not Steal, &c, Or else by *Sacramentum*, the Latin word for an Oath is meant the Repeating and Owning the Christian Faith contained

contained in the Creed, which was call'd *Christiani Dogmatis Sacramentum*. If the Antient Christians had made their publick Service, chiefly to consist in long Preachments, those of old who observ'd what they did (as *Pliny* doth in this Epistle) could not but have taken notice of it.

If our Assembling in Publick were only to Pray and Praise God, what Service can be more Divine and Angelical? To begin with the first, which is Prayer:

Prayer brings the Honour to God in the acknowledgment of his Attributes, as I have already shewn. It speaks our acknowledgment of his Power and Authority of our dependence of his All-sufficiency, of his infinite Goodness, which makes us with so much Confidence and Expectation, address our selves to him. What can be a more pleasing Service then that which

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ascribes

ascribes so much Glory to him.

What can be more acceptable then the ardent desires of good Souls to be made partakers of his Divine Nature, and according to that saying, *Religio est imitari quem colis*: It is the greatest sign of Religion to imitate the God we worship, it demonstrates the greatest Veneration for God in those that are earnest Solicitours at his Throne, that they may in the renewing of their minds be Transformed into his Image and Likeness.

And what can more Exalt God, then to wait and pray for the Influences of his Spirit to work in us what ever is most conformable to his Will, without which all the Teachings of men are ineffectual, and the Word it self but a dead Letter; and if God doth all in us, and for us (in the sense that some who are the great advancers of the Preaching Service, imagine) they of
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all the men in the World should think their most necessary duty, is to call for that by which they shall be irresistably carried to the performance of all that is required of them.

And if we are to make our Applications to God in Prayer, according as we are taught in his Word, drawing from thence the rules & matter of our Prayers, then certainly one great end of Teaching, must be to direct us how, and what to pray for. Whoever they are therefore that slight Prayers as inconsiderable Service to God, do not rightly understand what brings great Glory to him, and by consequence must be grateful to him; nor what is one main end of Preaching.

But that this Prayer for the Publick Worship of God, should be in a prescribed form, built upon the most generally received Maxims of our Religion, that it should be plain, and unaffected,

fect, suited to all Capacities, that so all may more readily joyn in it, and consent to it, is most reasonable; and that to prevent Schisms and Divisions, and the contempt of Gods Worship; for if it be left free and unconfined, as some would have it, what strange and indigested stuff it may produce, and thereby render Gods Service ridiculous, experience hath too plainly taught us.

2. If our meeting together be to Praise God, that Service is Heavenly, and therefore not to be neglected.

Praise and Thanksgiving of all other Services must needs be Divine, it is that which is the Imployment of blessed Saints and Angels in Heaven, who are perpetually casting their Crowns at the feet of God, and ascribing Glory to him. It is that which is reserved for the state of our greatest Perfection, and therefore we may conclude its Excellency from the same Argument, that
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the Apostle doth that of Charity, because when all other Services cease, this shall abide to Eternity; and therefore can be no way inferiour, or unworthy of the attendance of the most accomplished Christians.

What can more quicken our Veneration of the Divine Majesty, then to reckon up the Transcendent Excellencies of his Nature, What will make us fall before him with a just Reverence, more then to recount his Infinite Power? And that this may not degenerate into a superstitious fear, to speak also of his infinite Goodness, by which, and his Wisdom, the exercise of his Power is always bounded, and these considerations will render God lovely to us. And what ever Perfection of God, is by sounding forth of his Praises set before us, inflames our love to him, and kindles in us ardent desires of being united to him, and of being made partakers of his Likeness to our utmost capacity, which

which is the top of the Perfection and happiness which we can arrive to, either in this World, or the World to come.

To recount the works of Gods Creation and Providence, to mention the Wisdom, Mercy, Justice, Truth, in which they are all done; to tell all the wonders of his Power in Making, Preserving, and Governing the VWorld, and all Creatures, the admirable Contrivance of mans Redemption, &c. and all the particular Acts of Mercy and Goodness towards the Children of Men, suited to which, the Book of *Psalms* (which bears a constant part in our Service) affords plenty of Matter and Expressions: VVhat can be more for the Honour of God, or more Angelical then this?

VVhen we ascribe the glory of Gods Attributes to him, we by that means make good Impressions upon our own minds.

minds. As when we praise him for his Omnipotency, this makes us believe the certainty of what he promises, and of what he threatens; this makes us implore his help for all good, and for the keeping off, removing, and mitigating all evil. This makes us fear him that hath such absolute and uncontrollable Power. This makes us love him upon whom we depend for, and hath power of bestowing all manner of good. His Omnipresence acknowledged, begets in us a continual awe of him in all places, withdraws from all sin, which must be always in his sight, and makes us flee to him as one that is always at hand to help us. His Eternity makes us the more ready to believe him capable of promising Eternal life, and threatening everlasting death, and are a foundation of the Expectation of the one, and fear of the other, and consequently are the strongest Motives to promote good, and restrain evil. His Omniscience, by which he searches the

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the hearts, and knows our thoughts, understands what we do, whether we are sincere, whether we do perform what he hath enjoined, and keep his Laws, urge us to sincerity and perfect obedience. His infinite Justice make *Acquiesce* in all that he does, experience of Mercy make us depend upon him for the future: Famous preservations of his Church, and destruction of the Wicked, demonstrate his Existence; animate the good, and strengthen them in his ways and constancy to him. Thus the Contemplation of the Excellencies of God; and to repeat what is matter of our Praises, in any respect may have a great influence to Excite that which is good in us.

If therefore in our Publick Assemblies we stand up to Bless and Magnifie the Lord, and repeat part of those Divine Raptures contained in *David's* Psalms fitted for that purpose. I know not what Service can be more Cælestial,
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it is for us whilst we are here below to joyn in Consort with that heavenly Quire of Angels and Saints, that continually sound forth the high Praises of God.

4. There is further to be considered in the Service of the Church of *England*, where no Sermon is enjoyned, there are things very material, and such as should oblige all Christians not to slight it, but be present at it.

1. There is always in our Church Ministerial Absolution, which certainly deserves our attendance, and this being performed by a Person authorized thereunto, is the Publication of the Gospel, and a Declaration of the glad tidings of Peace. Do we think it our duty to Pray continually (as our Saviour hath taught us) for forgiveness of sins, and shall we not gladly and thankfully receive Gods pardon pronounced by the mouth of his Messengers? shall

Shall men by their neglect deprive themselves of that Consolation, and reject that Salve for their wounded Consciences which they in Gods Name offer, and have only power to Administer, which must be granted, if we do not make their Office a meer Nullity and a non-significant thing.

And if their Absolution be only Declarative, yet they are by God constituted for this purpose, and so they only have authority to declare this Grace for the full satisfaction of mens minds.

Thus ran the Commission of the first Preachers of the Gospel, that they should Preach Remission of sins, in the Name of Christ. And they that do not with humble acknowledgment receive it from them, may be reckoned among them that despise the Mercy of God and reject the Gospel.

And if Gods Ministers have only a
power

power of denouncing the sins of men to be Remitted upon their Confession, and Profession of Repentance; yet sure this was not given to them to no purpose, but that men should as often as they conveniently may, receive the benefit of it. And if any think the Consolations they Administer from Gods Word, are to be thankfully entertained; why not those that they do in Gods Name by virtue of their Office, declare to the people. And that God hath Invested the Ministers of the Gospel with such a power, seems plainly intimated by those places, *Mat. 16. 19. And I will give unto thee the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on Earth shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on Earth, shall be loosed in Heaven. John 20. 23. Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted to them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.* It Christ gave no particular Commission by these words to his Ministers, nor a kind of Power and

Commandment to declare it; these words seem to be to no purpose; for the pardon of all penitent sinners, was declared to be his will in the Gospel which they were to Preach, sufficiently without this.

How much Consolation flows from this Ministerial Absolution. *Calvin*, an Author in great esteem with those that most of all slight our Ministerial Absolution, shews when he says in his Institution, *L. 3. C. 4. S. 14.* that the power of the Keys, then hath its place and usefulness: *Quum solemnī recognitione vitiorum suorum veniam deprecatur tota Ecclesia*: Where the whole Church makes a solemn confession of sins, and asks the pardon from God, and then a little after in the same Paragraph; He says, it is not *Vulgare ac levi solatium habere illic presentem Christi legatum reconciliationis mandato praeclitum a quo denuntiari sibi absolutionem audiat*. That it is no small comfort to have the Embassadour of Christ there present, induced

dued with a power of Reconciliation, from whom the Church may hear Absolution pronounced.

The same Author acknowledges the benefit of private Absolution, in case of distress of mind, in the same Chapter and Paragraph of his Institutions. A little after where he hath these words, *Nec minoris efficacia aut fructus est privata Absolutio ubi ab iis Petiter qui singulari remedio ad infirmitatem suam sublevandam opus habent.* Nor, says he, is Private Absolution of less use, when it is desired by those who have need of a particular remedy; and after says, that the Mind is unquiet, notwithstanding the general Promises, till he that is disturbed in his mind comes to his Pastour and opens his wound to him, and hears that of the Gospel particularly directed to him, *Mat. 9. 2. Son be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee.* Then he says, He is delivered from that fear and uncertainty, with which before he was disquieted. From hence I ga-

ther, that if in such cases that when men unboosome themselves to their Ministers, they are authorized, and fittest to administer Consolation: Why is not the Absolution which they give upon a general Confession, to be diligently and thankfully received? And consequently, why should not all that would promote their own Interest, afford their attendance upon the Service of our Church, where it is always practised.

2. In the Service of our Church, there is always the Scripture, read which is more properly the Word of God, then a Sermon upon it may be. All the discourses of men not grounded upon the Word, are the products of their own Wit and Fancie; it is only what we have in the Word written that was divinely Inspired, and delivered to Prophets and Apostles, and from them conveyed down to us, and therefore what ever may challenge our belief, is what is there plainly written, or by
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clear consequence may be drawn from thence. And all men take upon them to judge whether the Sermons they hear be conformable to this rule, or no, and accordingly reject or receive what they are taught by them; which is an argument that they think the Word written to be more truly the Word of God, then the VVord preached.

Preaching is nothing else but Publishing, Declaring, or Pronouncing what is said to be Preached, and therefore the VVord read, declaring the will of God, may not unjustly be termed Preaching, and they that enjoy this are not destitute of the means of Salvation; nor have they reason to complain as if their Souls were starved, and the Bread of Life were not set before them.

And that Reading is Preaching, is intimated, *Acts 15. 21.* For *Moses* of old time hath in every City them that Preach him, being Read in the Synagogues every Sabbath day.

And certainly the Apostles Preached

as well when they wrote, as when they spake the Gospel of Christ.

The Word of God outwardly Administred by the inward concurrence and Co-operation of the Spirit, becomes effectual to the Conversion, Edification, and Salvation of men; this all acknowledg, but the Word is outwardly Administred as well by Reading, as by Teaching; and this way hath been effectual in some, and may be in others; and the reason why not so ordinarily, is the carelesness of men or some other cause, not from the thing it self.

And God working upon men by ways most sutable to their own Nature, there are no more plain nor powerful Motives for the Conviction and Conversion of men, then what the Scripture hath in it self discovered, and that so clearly as they may be understood without an Interpreter. And if the Scripture it self be a perfect and plain Rule of Faith and Manners, which is a Truth by all Protestants acknowledged,

ed, then there is no Article of the Christian Faith, nor no Duty required as necessary to Salvation, but may be made known to men by the Word Read: To this purpose St. *Chrysostom*, having urged the Reading of the Scriptures, and preventing that Objection: What if we understand not the things we Read there? Says to this effect: That things were plain enough there, and that the Books were Composed by Illiterate Persons. So that the most Unlearned might not excuse himself on this account, and that the Writers of those Books contrary to the guess of the Philosophers, did Explain their Notions as became the common Teachers of the World. So that every man of himself by Reading only, may understand the things that are said in them. *Hom. 3. de Luz. Tom. 3. p. 244.*

John 20. 31. *These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his Name.* If Faith, and

Life eternal upon it, were the end why the Wonders that Christ did were written, then surely being written, they are sufficient to accomplish that end, else they were written to no purpose. This Text speaks of the force of the Miracles themselves, to convince men, to beget Faith in them, and bring them to Eternal life; now it is no way material how these means of those ends are made known to us, whether by Writing or Speaking, for these are but several ways by which we are made acquainted with things. If therefore the Word written, as well as Spoken or Preached, may convey such knowledge to our minds as may bring us to Faith; then the Word written and read, as well as the Word preached, is a means of Salvation.

Nay, I think I may safely say it is a more likely and effectual means of Salvation, for what we hear from the word Read, is all Divine and unquestionable, whereas the Deductions made from
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Scripture by men are many times Uncouth, and Irrational, and at the best but Fallible. The good Doctrine contained in the Word Read, is Grave, Solid, Close, Intelligible, delivered with plain and unaffected Simplicity, whereas the Discourses of men from the Scripture are often Loose, Slight, Impertinent, Obscure, and Unprofitable, and have an Alloy of humane Infirmary, and vain Affectation mixed with them, which abates from their Price, and detracts from their Usefulness.

And as our Church hath the Scriptures always read as a part of its Service, so we have those portions of them which make known the Material and considerable Divine Truths; nor can any part of them be better accommodated to Divine Worship, that consists chiefly in Prayer and Thanksgiving, then the Book of *Psalms* that is furnished for all occasions of those Duties, and as it was a great part of the Jewish Liturgy, and
Vocal

Vocal Service of the Temple, so some of it is constantly a part of our Service.

And that this Book contains the Flowers of all things profitable in other Books, and that the Ancients used to magnifie it with great Commendations. Mr. *Hooker* in the 5th. Book of his *Eccles. Polit.* asserts: "VWhere he says of
 "it himself, VWhat is there necessary
 "for man to know which the *Psalms* are
 "not able to teach? They are to be-
 "ginners an easie and familiar Introdu-
 "ction, a mighty Augmentation of all
 "Virtue and Knowledg in such as are
 "entered before, a strong Confirmati-
 "on to the most perfect; amongst o-
 "ther things they teach Heroical Mag-
 "nanimity, exquisite Justice, grave
 "Moderation, exact VVisdom, unfeign-
 "ed Repentance, unwearied Patience,
 "the Mysteries of God, the sufferings
 "of Christ, the Terrors of VVrath,
 "the Comforts of Grace, the works
 "of Providence over this VWorld, and
 "the

"the promised: Joys of the world to
 "come; all good necessary to be either
 "known, done, or had, this one Cœ-
 "lestial Fountain yieldeth. *So he, and*
 "*goes on*, That there is no Grief or
 "Disease incident to the soul, for which
 "there is not in this Treasure-house a
 "present comfortable Remedy at all
 "times to be had.

Since therefore the Service of our
 Church hath always the VVord of God
 read, it is not to be slighted and forsak-
 en by them that profess Christianity,
 as if it were unworthy of their atten-
 dance.

3. There is in the Service of our
 Church continually used the publick
 Confession of the Christian Faith, and
 thereby an owning the sum of the Gos-
 pel, and the Rehearsal of this; and
 thereby taking it upon our selves, is a
 Remembring and Renewing of our Bap-
 tismal Vow, and since the Creed is (as
 it was call'd of old) *Sacramentum Mili-
 tare Christianorum*, the Reciting it is as
 it

it were a Lifting our selves under Christ
an ingaging our selves to, and entring
into Covenant with God; and if so it
being a kind of sacred Vow, it is a piece
of Religious worship, as every Vow
made to God is, implying an Invocati-
on of God to judge according to the
Truth or Falshood of what we promise.

Our standing up with so much Cere-
mony when the Creed is read, is an as-
setting of it, and obliging our selves to
it, in the Presence of Almighty God.

The Creed by the Ancients, is call'd
Christiani Dogmatis Sacramentum, as by
St. Hierom, St. August. and others:
Which make it appear, that they
thought it a kind of Promissory Oath;
and if so, it is truly a piece of Religious
worship.

The profession of Faith, and own-
ing the sum of the Gospel, is in one
sense Preaching the Gospel, for it is
Annunciatio Evangelii. *Κηρύγμα* is *Alta*
voce Pronunciare. What do they lose
that publickly make confession, in which
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the Minister leading the way, and the People joyning either *Tacitely*, by rising up at the Creed, or *Viva voce*, repeating it every one after him; methinks, seems to be a consenting to the Doctrine and Faith of the Gospel. The Belief in God there expressed, seems to me to imply the belief of all known Divine verities and Revelations, and of all that we have reason to think to be his will, and consequently includes the belief of the Scriptures, and whatever is there taught or commanded, and also Faith in Jesus Christ there profest, owning him as our Lord, may be said to involve in it the belief of the whole Doctrine of the Gospel, and what ever is there enjoyed.

This Confession of Faith is the greatest Honour to God, a setting our seal to Gods Truth, and acknowledging him as our Creator, Lord and Governour, upon whom we wholly depend, and from whom we expect all the good we need, either for this Life or that which is to come; and being a taking of that
Faith

Faith upon our selves, it lays an engagement upon us for Universal Obedience, then which nothing can be more for the glory of God. Nor is it a thing ridiculous to use the Creed in our Devotions (as some would make the world believe) or making it a Prayer: But since without Faith we cannot please God, nor approach his Throne of Grace with so much confidence and hope of acceptance; the Recitation of the Creed being a kind of solemn Engagement of our selves to God, is no way impenitent, but very much becoming the Service of God, and our addresses that we make to him by Prayer.

What esteem the Ancient Church had of the Creed, appears by their requiring all Infants to be taught it, and of all admitted to Baptism, and of their *Catechumens*, and of all strangers receiv'd into their Communion. A profession of it as judging it no doubt to be an owning of Christianity, which makes *St. Aug.* in his Book *De fide & symbolo*,
say

say of it, *Hec est fides quæ paucis verbis tenenda novellis Christianis datur. Quæ paucæ verba fidelibus nota sunt ut credendo subjungatur Deo, subjugati recte vivant, recte revendo cor mundent, corde mundo quod credunt intelligant.* This is the Faith which in a few words, is delivered to be held by all newly Initiated Christians, which few words are known to those that believe, that believing they may submit themselves to God, submitting themselves they may live as they ought, living as they ought they may cleanse their hearts, cleansing their hearts they may the better understand what they profess to believe.

And this Creed was a *Symbole* or Note, to distinguish Christians from Infidels. Therefore a publick profession of our Union in this Faith, is not to be lookt upon as an inconsiderable part of Gods Service.

4. We are to consider, that in the Service of our Church where a Sermon is not, Catechizing is enjoyned, which
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is the best and most useful Preaching, being an Instruction in the sum of Christianity, and what is necessary to be known, and believed to Salvation; and when this is performed as it ought to be, What more can be required? Without this all other Sermons are but empty sounds, which affect rather the Senses, then the Understandings of men; they are running divisions upon Religion to them that have not yet perceived the grounds. Those pleasing Varieties and Flourishes in Pulpit Harangues, till a good foundation be laid by Catechizing, may delight, but not inform.

What else is Preaching the Gospel, but acquainting People with what they are to know and believe to Salvation: And what doth this better then Catechizing, which in a familiar way, and with particular Direction and Application to those that are Taught, leads them into the knowledg of the Gospel.

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Neither is this to be accounted only Meat for Babes, for what ever higher Attainments others may boast of, they are vainly putt up ; for this is only what they ought to know.

Neither may grown Persons slight this kind of teaching since by it they may be inlightned in what they are Ignorant, or put in mind of what they have forgotten.

Without this Catechizing, how can young ones be prepared for Confirmation, which is their solemn owning the Christian Faith, and which being done, is one good means to stop the clamours of the *Anabaptists*; for though we Baptize Infants upon other accounts, yet it cannot but seem a little more reasonable even to them, that we admit them by Sureties, who professing Christianity themselves, give the Church security for their Education in the Christian Faith, till they come of Age to take it upon themselves ; and then they do it and make it as much their

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own Profession, as they do who are not Baptized, till they make it.

But by Catechizing, we are not to understand long and Elaborate Discourses upon those Heads of Divinity that may be expressly delivered in the Catechism, or may be reduced to it, for that may more Perplex then Instruct the Hearers. What ever is said therefore should be short and plain, and in such a way that those that are to learn may bear a considerable part in their Answers. And this is the way which Masters of other Sciences use to convey the Knowledg of what they Teach. And indeed men most truly know only what they remember, and being asked, can give an account of, by which it best appears what they understand.

And if this were only the teaching of matters to be known in Religion, by material and pertinent Questions and Answers, the skill of men in the Mysteries of the Gospel would be much more then it is.

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Sermons and Pulpit Discourses pass away often times without either being understood or regarded, whereas what people Learn by this way of Catechizing, is with so particular application to them, that they cannot so easily avoid it.

And if Preaching in the sense that some understand the Word, were the best way of Instructing the People then to spend one part of the day in Examining the Hearers, and see how they Remember; and understand what they were taught in the other, if what is delivered to them be considerable and worth their knowledg, will be most for their profit: Else they being always devouring, but never well digesting, will not be nourished, and they may be ever Learning but never come to the knowledg of the Truth.

But our Church hath taken a better course, and enjoyn'd Catechizing, the most probable way of Infusing into men the Auditory, solid and substantial know-

ledg. But before I conclude, something must be said to prevent mistake, and answer Objections that are very obvious.

1. Then I would not have my design so much misconstrued, is, if I intended to decry Preaching, or make it wholly useless; for the contrary I have professed at the beginning, where I applaud the Constitution of our Church, which for one part of the days of our most solemn Worship enjoyns it. Far be it from me to vilifie that excellent Gift which God hath bestowed upon men to Interpret, and apply the Scripture for the Edification of his Church, or to suppose it given to no purpose, or that it should be like the negligent Servants Talent, un-impli'd for the Honour of our great Master, and the good of others.

Preaching in those that are skilful to divide the Word aright, affords every one his portion of Instruction, Admonition, Reproof, Consolation, &c.

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It finds out those profitable Truths, that though they may lie plain in the Scriptures, yet through the carelessness of men may not be observed ; it is a great help to the infirmities of those ; that for want of Leasure and many Incumbrances, do not search into, nor find out the abundance of Divine Knowledg contained in the rich Treachery of Gods Word, it puts men in mind of what they are too apt to forget, and draws good consequences from what they know and believe it inflames the affections of men, which are ready to grow cool in their zeal to God, and the things of Heaven. I might enlarge in the praise of this Ordinance of God, and that very freely from the just esteem I have of it. But I hope it is needless, since I sincerely declare that I only have endeavoured to take off contempt from other parts of Divine Service, and to shew the error of them that magnifie Preaching at such a rate, as if no other Service deserved their attendance.

There are likewise two Objections, very ordinary, that must be satisfied.

Object. 1. They say they can Read the Prayers, and the rest of the Service at Home,

Answer. That we assemble in Publick for those Performances, makes the duty more solemn and more worthy of the great God. It is an owning him in the Eyes of the World. By this we shew Union and Christian Love, and are tied together in Charity, according to that *Psal 55. 14. We took sweet counsel together, we walked to the House of God in company.* By mutual good Examples we quicken one anothers Piety and Devotion, and the joynt Prayers of Gods people in their solemn Assemblies, are more prevalent. Besides the authority of a Person appointed to offer Prayers and Thanksgivings, as Gods Minister is, render the Service more effectual for the good of them that are present and a place set a part for

for that purpose, make it still more Decorous and for the Honour of God ; all which are wanting, or not so well performed in Private and Domestick Meetings.

Object. 2. *The Service of the Church may be performed, and a Sermon joyned.*

To which I answer several things.

1. If Catechizing be, as I have said, the best sort of Preaching, a Sermon ought not to juttle this out, or cause it to be slightly and perfunctorily passed over ; and if that be done as it ought, it is sufficient, unless we would have the service too long and tedious.

2. If a Sermon be made always necessary, then the Worship of God is counted Lame ; and this being required, will nourish up the people in their superstitious conceits of Sermons ; and in a contempt of the Liturgy, as if it

were no true service of God.

3. If Pulpit Discourses were not so frequent, people would be more affected with them, more attentive to them, are consequently more benefited by them.

4. The Preachers themselves (if too great a burthen of this work were not Exacted from them) might have more time to improve in Learning, and make their Discourses more weighty and considerable; they might make their Nets more strong and substantial, and throw them out with more Dexterity, do more good, and feed their Flocks with knowledge and understanding; they might wipe off a great many Impertinencies, and not weave so many Cobwebs, nor beat out their Discourses so thin to equalize the time appointed for them; to all which they are often constrained by the too quick Returns of Preaching.

5. Why

5. Why should that be always expected, which is no necessary part of Gods Worship, for which the strength of all men is not sufficient; unless it be desired that the conceit of some people should be gratified, who think they have purchased the Preachers Lungs, and that he is to spend them upon them, and to exhaust his Strength and Spirits in speaking, if it were only to give them the satisfaction that he is not paid his yearly Maintenance for nothing, and rigidly demand an afternoon Sermon, though many times it serves only like a fit of Musick to Lull them asleep after their Dinner. I know not, I say, why such pains (which to some men is not tollerable) should be required unless we wish for the wasting and swealing out the Lights of the Church, which might longer give Light to the World, were they not consumed by over much, and unnecessary labour.

6. I think it were best that all men should be kept to an observance of the Laws, and not swerve from the Directions of Authority; for by the same reason they may Innovate in the Worship of God (for ought I know) as well as Preach without order. However if this be left to Liberty, some doing it, others not, this will raise a Division amongst us, and an Odium will be contracted by those that omit it; and it will beget an Alienation of the Hearts of the People from them, as if they were not true Labourers, but Loiterers in Gods Harvest,

7. That I may not seem to plead for Idleness, I would have it considered: That if the work our Church appoints for Ministers, be as it ought to be performed, there will be no place for Slothfulness. Besides, the whole of the Ministers work is not in the Pulpit, Prayers, Administration of Sacraments, &c. are a great part of it: He is to be

a Spiritual Guide to the Souls of his People, if they did therefore repair to him for Advice and Directions, as their Condition required; as they would find him Employment enough, and such as no good man would refuse so they might more advantage themselves, then by all his Sermons.

FINIS.



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